

URGING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE THE UNITED NATIONS-AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SUDAN WITH ESSENTIAL TACTICAL AND UTILITY HELICOPTERS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 432.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 432) urging the international community to provide the United Nations-African Union Mission in Sudan with essential tactical and utility helicopters.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, today, the Senate considers S. Res. 432, a bipartisan resolution on Darfur cosponsored by myself, Senator LUGAR, and a number of other colleagues. This resolution urges the members of the international community, including the United States, to step up to fill a critical need in equipping the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force, namely, 24 tactical and utility helicopters.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has termed these aerial vehicles indispensable to allow the peacekeepers to carry out their mission to protect civilians. I am pleased to see that several countries may now be volunteering to begin to fill this gap. According to press reports, the governments of Ethiopia and Bangladesh are discussing the matter with the United Nations, and I hope that their contributions can be used to help meet this urgent need.

While I want to acknowledge these potential contributions, I would also emphasize that other countries must do the same: the peacekeepers in Darfur need the full complement of 24 helicopters. Darfur is the size of Texas. These aerial assets are critical. Our resolution urges President Bush to personally contact other heads of state on this matter. I have been told that senior officials at the White House and State Department are continuing to engage in high-level outreach on this issue. I respectfully suggest that this outreach should be elevated to conversations among chiefs of state. The United States has led the world in efforts to provide assistance to the people of Darfur. Personally, I believe that we should also lead the world now in providing the equipment or personnel that are needed to ensure the success of the peacekeeping mission. Certainly, collectively, members of the United Nations should do so.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that any state-

ments relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 432) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 432

Whereas, on August 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council approved United Nations Security Council Resolution 1706, providing that the existing United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) "shall take over from [the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS)] responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement upon the expiration of AMIS' mandate but in any event no later than 31 December 2006";

Whereas, on July 31, 2007, the United Nations Security Council approved United Nations Security Council Resolution 1769 reaffirming Resolution 1706 and stating that the Security Council "[d]ecides . . . to authorize and mandate the establishment . . . of an AU/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) . . . [and] [d]ecides that UNAMID, which shall incorporate AMIS personnel and the UN Heavy and Light Support Packages to AMIS, shall consist of up to 19,555 military personnel, including 360 military observers and liaison officers, and an appropriate civilian component including up to 3,772 police personnel and 19 formed police units comprising up to 140 personnel each";

Whereas, on December 31, 2007, the United Nations-African Union hybrid mission formally assumed control of peacekeeping operations in Darfur, but did so with only approximately 9,000 troops and police on the ground, far short of both the authorized and necessary levels;

Whereas the Government of Sudan continues to obstruct implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1706 and 1769 in several respects, including by refusing to conclude a Status of Forces Agreement or to cooperate on issues such as the force composition, the authorization of night flights, customs clearance, land access, and visas for staff;

Whereas, on January 7, 2008, uniformed elements of the army of Sudan attacked a clearly marked UNAMID supply convoy, severely wounding a Sudanese civilian driver;

Whereas rebels, militias, government forces, bandits, and others continue to prey upon the people of Darfur and upon humanitarian workers, increasing the urgency of both deploying the full complement of peacekeepers and police and of reaching a lasting political settlement;

Whereas the preliminary results of a United Nations assessment entitled the "Food Security and Nutrition Assessment of the Conflict-Affected Population of Darfur (August/September 2007)" reveal that global acute malnutrition in Darfur increased in 2007, exceeding emergency levels in some regions;

Whereas the United Nations-African Union Mission in Sudan has been hampered not only by obstruction by the Government of Sudan and other obstacles to peace in the region, but by the failure of the international community to commit the resources, equipment, and personnel needed to carry out the peacekeeping mission, most notably the failure to provide critically needed aviation and transportation assets;

Whereas the United Nations-African Union Mission in Sudan needs, among other critical mobility capabilities that have not been met, 18 utility helicopters and 6 tactical helicopters and crews;

Whereas, in a report to the Security Council dated December 24, 2007, the Secretary-General termed these helicopters indispensable and stated that "UNAMID must be capable of rapid mobility over large distances, especially over terrain where roads are the exception. Without the missing helicopters, this mobility—a fundamental requirement for the implementation of the UNAMID mandate—will not be possible.";

Whereas a large number of countries possess the military assets that could help to fulfill this requirement;

Whereas the United States continues to lead the world in its contributions to efforts to end the genocide in Darfur, including by providing more than \$4,500,000,000 since 2004 in response to the Darfur crisis;

Whereas continued failure on the part of the international community to take all steps necessary to generate, deploy, and maintain an effective United Nations-African Union hybrid peacekeeping force will result in the continued loss of life and further degradation of humanitarian infrastructure in Darfur; and

Whereas it would be inexcusable for the international community to allow an authorized peacekeeping mission intended to help bring an end to genocide and its effects to founder or be compromised because of a failure to commit critical elements, such as the 24 helicopters needed to meet the critical mobility capabilities of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Sudan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) urges the members of the international community, including the United States, that possess the capability to provide the tactical and utility helicopters needed for the United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur to do so as soon as possible; and

(2) urges the President to intervene personally by contacting other heads of state and asking them to contribute the aircraft and crews for the Darfur mission.

ESTABLISHING THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA BY THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the Senate to consider, en bloc, two concurrent resolutions, S. Con. Res. 67 and S. Con. Res. 68, both relating to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolutions by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 67) establishing the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 68) authorizing the use of the rotunda by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolutions en bloc.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolutions be agreed to en bloc,